

RESOURCE LIBRARY
ACTIVITY : 50 MINS

Inspiring Conservation Through Art

Students explore the varying roles people can play as conservationists operating within local and global communities to save endangered species. They research an eco-artist and identify ways they bring awareness and inspire action toward saving our planet. Then, students create a social media profile sharing information about the artist they learned about.

GRADES

6 - 8

SUBJECTS

Arts and Music, Biology, Ecology, Conservation, English Language Arts, Geography, Human Geography, Physical Geography, Social Studies, Civics, Storytelling, Photography

CONTENTS

1 PDF, 1 Video

OVERVIEW

Students explore the varying roles people can play as conservationists operating within local and global communities to save endangered species. They research an eco-artist and identify ways they bring awareness and inspire action toward saving our planet. Then, students create a social media profile sharing information about the artist they learned about.

For the complete activity with media resources, visit:

<http://www.nationalgeographic.org/activity/inspiring-conservation-through-art/>

In collaboration with

DIRECTIONS

Engaging In The Fight Against Extinction Unit Driving Question: *How can we, as planetary stewards, take an active role in saving species from extinction?*

Slowing Extinction Lesson Driving Question: *How can we inspire others to protect natural habitats and save endangered species from extinction?*

1. Introduce students to the influence that visual artists can have in conservation efforts through video and discussion.

- Play the video on Joel Sartore’s project, *The Photo Ark* (2:56), for the class.
- After watching the video, conduct a class discussion by asking students:
 - *How has Joel Sartore inspired action?*
 - *How does he make others care about endangered species and their contributions to species' extinction?*
 - *How can we use Sartore’s work as a model of how to advocate and fight for endangered species?*

2. Guide students through the investigation of an eco-artist and the development of a social media profile to highlight their values and work.

- Distribute copies of the *Eco-Artist Social Media Profile* handout to each student.
- Have students choose one eco-artist from the handout, read about their work, and look at examples of their art to identify how their art brings awareness or inspires action.
- Instruct students to develop a Twitter-inspired social media profile that provides an image of their chosen eco-artist, their name, an imaginary handle (i.e., @JoelsArkNGS), a description of who they are, and write three to five mock tweets that illustrate what they believe in. Have students use the *Eco-Artist Social Media Profile* handout for full directions and guidance.
- After students are finished, hang the completed profiles around the room and allow students to participate in a gallery walk, during which they will leave a “comment” on the artists’ tweets using sticky notes.
- Debrief the activity with a class discussion. Ask students to use their focal eco-artists to inform their responses:

- *How have eco-artists inspired action?*
- *How do eco-artists inspire others to care about endangered species and their contributions to species' extinction?*
- *How can we use eco-artists as an example of how to advocate and fight for endangered species?*

Informal Assessment

Eco-Artist Social Media Profile: During the gallery walk, check on students' understanding of how the artist represents their beliefs and hopes for inspiring action.

OBJECTIVES

Subjects & Disciplines

- Arts and Music
 - Biology**
 - Ecology
- Conservation
- English Language Arts
 - Geography**
 - Human Geography
 - Physical Geography
 - Social Studies**
 - Civics
 - Storytelling**
 - Photography

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- Explore ways eco-activists use art to raise awareness of environmental issues.
- Create social media profiles to showcase the goals and tools of eco-activists.

Teaching Approach

- Project-based learning

Teaching Methods

- Discussions
- Hands-on learning
- Multimedia instruction

Skills Summary

This activity targets the following skills:

- 21st Century Student Outcomes
 - Information, Media, and Technology Skills
 - Information Literacy
 - Information, Communications, and Technology Literacy
 - Media Literacy
 - Learning and Innovation Skills
 - Communication and Collaboration
 - Creativity and Innovation
 - Critical Thinking and Problem Solving
- Critical Thinking Skills
 - Analyzing
 - Applying
 - Creating
 - Understanding

National Standards, Principles, and Practices

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS & LITERACY

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.7.1:

Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on Grade 7 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas

and expressing their own clearly.

• **WHST.6-8.4:**

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

THE COLLEGE, CAREER & CIVIC LIFE (C3) FRAMEWORK FOR SOCIAL STUDIES STATE STANDARDS

• **D2.Civ.10.6-8:**

Explain the relevance of personal interests and perspectives, civic virtues, and democratic principles when people address issues and problems in government and civil society.

• **D4.7.6-8:**

Assess their individual and collective capacities to take action to address local, regional, and global problems, taking into account a range of possible levers of power, strategies, and potential outcomes.

Preparation

What You'll Need

MATERIALS YOU PROVIDE

- Chart paper

REQUIRED TECHNOLOGY

- Internet Access: Required
- Tech Setup: 1 computer per learner, 1 computer per pair, Color printer, Monitor/screen, Printer, Projector, Word processing software

PHYSICAL SPACE

- Classroom
- Media Center/Library

GROUPING

- Heterogeneous grouping
- Large-group instruction

- Large-group learning
- Small-group work

BACKGROUND & VOCABULARY

Background Information

It is common practice for visual and literary artists to use their medium as a platform for activism. One type of activist art is environmental art. It gained popularity in the 1960s and '70s, but still thrives today. Environmental art is created by artists who are concerned with both local and global environmental circumstances. Since these artists are concerned about the environment, their art often improves an area environmentally or brings awareness to a specific environmental issue. Poetry, painting, performance, photography, murals, graffiti, music, sculpture, upcycling, and many other art forms have frequently been employed as artists advocate for their causes.

Prior Knowledge

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Recommended Prior Activities

- [Causes and Effects of Extinction](#)
- [Endangered Species and Their Biomes](#)
- [Mass Extinctions Over Time](#)
- [Promoting Actions to Prevent Extinction](#)
- [The Impacts of the Anthropocene Epoch](#)
- [Understanding Keystone Species](#)

Vocabulary

Term	Part of Speech	Definition
citizen	noun	member of a country, state, or town who shares responsibilities for the area and benefits from being a member.
conservation	noun	management of a natural resource to prevent exploitation, destruction, or neglect.

Term	Part of Speech	Definition
ecology	<i>noun</i>	branch of biology that studies the relationship between living organisms and their environment.
endangered species	<i>noun</i>	organism threatened with extinction.
public policy	<i>noun</i>	course of actions, beliefs, and laws taken by a government having to do with a specific issue or concern.
stewardship	<i>noun</i>	responsible management to ensure benefits are passed on to future generations.

For Further Exploration

Articles & Profiles

- [National Geographic: These Young Activists Are Striking to Save Their Planet From Climate Change](#)

Instructional Content

- [National Geographic: The Power of Images in Storytelling](#)

